

Peace Comes Dropping Slow: The Case of Northern Ireland

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"And I shall have peace there, for peace comes dropping slow..." (Yeats, 1908)

Introduction

In 1908 when W.B. Yeats was detailing his desire of a personal exodus to Sligo² he was not to know that taken in isolation his words could readily describe the elongated peace process the island he loved so well was still to be going through over a century later. For many external observers a post-Good Friday Agreement³ Northern Ireland is the epitome of a country enjoying a newfound peace. The reality though is that this is a peace still 'dropping slow.' In the years that have passed since the historic signing of the Agreement Northern Irish politics has gradually attempted to normalise. However, the spectre of *The Troubles* still lingers in the lives of many. The questions of how to deal with the past are yet to be fully resolved, as are those of how to properly shape the future. The constant threat posed by the Provisional IRA no longer has a presence in Northern Irish society. This has though been replaced by the more sporadic, but demonstrably significant, violence perpetrated by an array of dissident successors (Horgan and Morrison, 2011). While many assessments of the Northern Irish conflict understandably focus on the 20th century violence and its subsequent peace process of the 1990s the present chapter will evaluate a 21st century Northern Ireland. It will assess some of the key developments and road blocks that have been faced in the present and recent past. Within this there will be a demonstration of how a multi-disciplinary and multi-faceted focus is required to understand the problems still facing the people of Northern Ireland. It is only with this level of true understanding that we can have any hope of finding a genuine resolution to the enduring conflict. This chapter will demonstrate that one needs to look beyond the terrorism in order to bring about a clear resolution. In doing so it will focus on one of the key non-terrorist activities of paramilitary groups on both sides of the sectarian divide, namely the continuing threat of violent vigilantism. Therefore from an academic point of view we must also look beyond the traditional terrorism analysis to achieve this necessary understanding.

Beyond Terrorism

For too long terrorism research has been constrained by the hunt for a true definition. Endless articles have been dedicated to the pursuit of an agreeable conceptualisation of the term and the actions it suggests. However, the case of Northern Irish paramilitary groups and many other national and international terrorist groups have demonstrated how we need to look beyond the terrorism to truly understand these groups and the individuals who declare their membership. We must be clear that by labelling a group or individual as 'terrorist' does not automatically ascribe that all of their actions, be they legal or

illegal, should be classified as an act of 'terrorism.' By applying the same logic of labeling an individual, organisation or state as a non-terrorist actor does not automatically deem all their actions to be non-terrorist by definition. Terrorism should be considered as the employment of violence or the threat of repeated violence by an individual or group intent on bring about a political effect. The aim of this action is to bring about a state of fear in a wider audience than the direct physical victims of the initial act or threat of violence A terrorist incident should be defined by the use of violence or the threat of violence to bring about political effect, not by the specific motive of the perpetrators. Therefore terrorism is a tactic that can be employed by any individual or group, whether they are state or non-state actors.

Upon analysis it is clear that the acts that can be defined as terrorism are but intermittent peaks within a group's overall existence, and an individual's overall membership. Therefore in order to gain the most complete understanding of these groups and their activities it is essential that we must also understand the troughs of non-terrorist actions (Morrison, 2013). While the bombings, assassinations and other attacks understandably garner the news headlines there is much more to a terrorist existence. To gain that true understanding we are all striving for we must also consider the range of non-terrorist activity these groups and individuals are engaged in. Terrorism research is about more than terrorism. It is also about understanding how individuals move from being rank and file members to leadership figures. It is about investigating why and how members stay affiliated to a group at a time of ceasefire. It is about analysing the non-violent political campaigning of the groups and the statements they put out. But it is also about understanding the ordinary criminality of the groups as well as the political criminality of the terrorism they partake in. Across the history of the Northern Irish conflict individuals on both sides of the paramilitary divide have engaged in criminal acts from violent vigilantism to extortion, smuggling to intimidation. These acts have targeted external communities. However, the most consistent victims are the very communities these groups claim to represent. Towards the end of this chapter there will be an assessment of the modern day vigilantism and the questions this raises on how we should be analysing terrorism and the other illegal activities perpetrated by the terrorist groups and actors.

Parallel to the illegal activity we must also appreciate the equal importance of a group's activity external from both their terrorist and criminal actions. We must appreciate their legal activity. By striving to achieve this we provide ourselves with a greater opportunity to attain a more holistic understanding of the groups, which in turn allows for a greater chance of success in countering their actions. By looking beyond their violent and illegal activity we have seen that these terrorist groups should be considered similar to political interest organisations, the key difference being their utilisation of violence in the pursuit of their goals. When taking into consideration this overall understanding it is paramount that we not only look at the 'headline' or high-end objectives of the groups. It is vital that there is also an appreciation that there are more immediate and lower-end objectives that similarly need to be understood. Political organisational theory details that the immediate goal of any political organisation, terrorist groups

included, is to maintain organisational survival (Crenshaw, 1985; Oots, 1989; Morrison, 2014). It is only when this survival is confirmed that the groups can then aim to achieve their ultimate objectives be that a united Ireland or the maintenance of the status quo, a Northern Irish state with an enduring tie to the United Kingdom. Through this chapter there is an appreciation of this need to look below the surface of the ultimate objectives to truly grasp the importance of the acts of the terrorist groups. It will aim to demonstrate the possibility that the persistent struggle for survival, relevance and legitimacy that the Irish Republican paramilitary groups have endeavoured for across the decades is being reflected in the modern day actions of their non-terrorist foes of the unionist establishment in a modern day Northern Ireland.

Marc Sageman has recently asked whether terrorism research has stagnated (Sageman, 2014). In his deeply critical assessment of the area he states that we are no nearer to answering the question “what leads a person to political violence?” (Ibid, p.1) While this article raises some salient points it fails to appreciate the overall breadth of what terrorism studies should, and does, encompass. By insinuating that the stagnation of this area of study is as a result of the failure to answer this one question it mistakenly implies that the sole goal of any terrorism researcher must be to provide an answer to this. If one was to abide by this notion it is *then* that the terrorism research will stagnate. There is a range of different questions which need to be answered by research, “what leads a person to political violence?” is only one of them. It is clear that this one of the most important questions to answer, potentially the most important. However, there are a myriad of other vital questions that we are paying little to no attention to (See Schmid, 2011). Therefore the stagnation of research on the topic will not be as a result of the failure to answer that one question, it will be as a result of remaining blinkered in the scope and breadth of the potential questions. This chapter will focus on some of these topics in relation to the case of Northern Ireland. The emphasis of the analysis will be predominantly on the Irish Republican paramilitaries. The sources used throughout the analysis will be first-hand interviews with leadership and rank and file members of the organisations as well as primary documents and statements released by relevant individuals and organisations. With the ever-changing nature of Northern Irish politics and security it is important to note that this chapter is update as of April 11th 2014.

The Continued Journey to Peace in Northern Ireland

The silencing of Northern Irish paramilitarism has been a long and slow journey. It has required huge sacrifices and leaps of faith by all of those involved. In the aftermath of the signing of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998 the international community, and many academics, rejoiced and then turned their focus elsewhere. The enduring conflict had been brought to a close. However, the reality on the ground has been much different. As with any post conflict environment the implementation of the structure agreed is as difficult, if not more so than, the process reaching agreement on the make-up of these structures. Each of the relevant parties must ensure the backing of their respective membership, support bases and the wider society before they can sign up to any restructuring. A leadership in agreement with any significant

change is only beneficial to the process if they come with the backing of the majority of their base. A leadership moving prior to gaining this backing base leaves their party open to factionalisation, de-legimisation and potential expiration. Throughout *The Troubles* and even in post-conflict Northern Ireland each of the relevant organisations, both paramilitary and political, have moved with a frustrating degree of reticence and gradualism. No party wished to be seen to be giving up more ground than their opponents or to be selling out on the core ideals of their party or organisation.

One of the great successes of the Northern Irish peace process has been the politicisation of the majority of the Provisional Irish Republican Movement. Under the leadership of Gerry Adams, Martin McGuinness and others the Provisionals have moved from being one of the longest serving insurgent movements to being a central part of the political establishment of Northern Ireland. But this was not an overnight politicisation. The multitude of strategic changes necessary to reach this point were spread across decades of violence. It was the step-by-step gradualism of their politicisation, interspersed with horrific acts of terrorism and other forms of violence, which enabled them to bring the majority of their membership and support with them away from violence. The slow pace of their strategic change has brought them from the paramilitary advocates of absolute abstentionism⁴ to a peaceful political organisation sharing power in Stormont⁵ with the Democratic Unionist Party (the DUP), and potentially the future balance of power in Dail Eireann.⁶ They have moved from a terrorist organisation that readily targeted the extended British royal family⁷ to one whose leadership⁸ is comfortable not only meeting and shaking hands with the Queen but also joining a toast to the health and happiness of her and her husband the Duke of Edinburgh.⁹ This is an organisation that for generations would not recognise, and would actively target, the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) and who now sit on the policing board of their successors the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI). In the build up these historic strategic changes the leadership repeatedly demonstrated their ability and willingness to postpone and back away if they believed that they did not have the majority support of their base. This was in order to maintain their legitimacy and strength within the community and to protect the survival of their leadership and the direction they wished to take the organisation. They were aiming to dampen the resolve of internal dissenters and to discourage others from siding with those speaking out against them. In essence they were attempting to keep the Republican Movement intact. Under this guise they consistently showed their willingness to leave the negotiating table and resume their armed campaign. However, when necessary they also showed the ability to make bold and historically significant strategic changes, vital for the success of the peace process and a post-conflict Northern Ireland. The enormity of these changes was clearly stated by the former public relations officer of the Provisionals Danny Morrison.

You know if you had said walking around the place in the yard August 1994 "we're going to be supporting the amendment of Articles 2 and 3¹⁰, ending the Northern abstentionism, supporting a new police service, the IRA is going to first of all

open its dumps, its precious dumps, you know these weapons that had been painstakingly smuggled into the country, open its dumps, then seal its dumps forever, and that Martin McGuinness was going to end up in government with Ian Paisley". I mean that was so fantastic, and fabulous, if you had said that to me in July 1994 I would have been sending for the men in white coats. (Interview with Danny Morrison, January 21st, 2008)

The importance of the gradual nature of these changes has been emphasised by all sides, even those dissidents who are opposed to the modern day direction of mainstream Irish Republicanism. This is illustrated in the following quote from Francie Mackey the chairman of the 32 County Sovereignty Movement, which is believed to be the political wing of the Real IRA, and now the New IRA.

It was broken down to single issue and that was the only issue being dealt with, as if all of the issues weren't co-related. That allowed the leadership the breathing space throughout the whole period to go that one step closer. (Interview with Francie Mackey, June 25th, 2008)

With the magnitude of changes in the movement there was bound to be dissent, and it was the task of the leadership to weaken the support of the dissenters and to prevent any threat to their leadership or competition for their membership and support. To a large degree they succeeded. However, as is echoed throughout Irish Republican history on a number of separate occasions the organisation split as a result of to the leadership's gradual politicisation and continued involvement in the peace process. While these splits proved to be vital in the continued politicisation of the movement they also provided the origins of the largest threat to Northern Irish security today, the violent dissident Irish Republicans.¹¹

Throughout the peace process it was the snail-paced developments on all sides that proved most frustrating for many of those both observing and involved. However, there was an unfortunate necessity for this slowness. For a conflict that had defined a country for close to thirty years none of these changes could or should have been implemented over night. It was more important to implement at the right time rather than the soonest time. In the years after the historic Good Friday Agreement it took time for a normalised Northern Ireland to take hold. From the game-changing involvement of the DUP, to the acceptance on all sides of the PSNI, to the devolution of justice powers each change needed to be eased through gradually to guarantee permanence rather than immediacy. There have been many apparent fault-starts along the way, with the Stormont government more often dissolved than devolved during the first decade of the twenty-first century. However, the necessary foundational institutional and societal changes implemented are now starting to take hold and becoming normality. With this Northern Ireland is moving forward with the next stage of the long and arduous process, a process that sees the country having to deal

with outstanding issues yet to be resolved. With this must be expected a further stage of gradual change and frustrating negotiations on all sides.

Modern day Northern Irish politics has seen the formerly unimaginable situation of the previously sworn enemies of Sinn Fein and the DUP sharing power. The membership, ethos and ideologies of these two parties could not be more different. However, as with all political parties their immediate aim is the same. Before they can achieve their purposive goals they must first guarantee organisational survival. As has been briefly documented above for Sinn Fein and the wider Republican Movement this has seen them move from paramilitary to political activity in a gradual and deliberate manner with the aim of maintaining majority support at each strategic turn. As much as they would like to emphasise their differences similar has been true within all strands of unionism. The leadership of mainstream unionism within the DUP and the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) have similarly brought their communities a direction that for many was unimaginable and even abhorrent. While they do not have the strong paramilitary past to move away from they have had significant ideological, strategic and emotional milestones to overcome. They have largely convinced their community of the necessity to accept the legitimate role that Irish Republicans, and more importantly their former paramilitary representatives of Sinn Fein, have to play in the political establishment, and shaping the future, of Northern Ireland. This has not been an easy task and one that as with the changes implemented by the Provisional Republican Movement has taken time. It was only recently in 2006 where it was a huge milestone for the DUP to even enter negotiations involving Sinn Fein. We now see them sharing power with the party they formerly despised.

The post-conflict society of Northern Ireland has much to contend with and resolve. In 2013 it was clear that further negotiations were necessary on some of the key outstanding issues. There were three key areas identified for focus:

1. Parades, select commemorations and related protests
2. Flags and emblems
3. Contending with the past.

The former US diplomat Richard Haass and former deputy national security adviser to the president of the United States on Iraq and Afghanistan Meghan O'Sullivan were invited to chair cross party talks on bringing about resolution to these issues. Under their guidance a number of iterations of proposed agreements were authored. However, they were unable to present proposals that were agreeable to all parties. Their final attempt came on New Year's Eve 2013.¹² During the final stages of the negotiations it was externally revealed that during the peace process the UK government had notified approximately 200 republican paramilitary suspects that they were no longer under risk of arrest. This controversy about the 'on the runs' led to the UUP, under the leadership of Mike Nesbitt, pulling out of all talks. Ultimately with the final proposals tabled it was only Sinn Fein and the nationalist Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) that signed up to the agreement. The DUP, UUP and the cross-community

Alliance Party failed to fully endorse it. In the months since the failure to reach agreement Haass has warned that

...in that kind of environment – particularly where politics are not shown to be making progress – alienation will continue to fester and violence, I fear, could very well re-emerge as a characteristic of daily life. (BBC News, March 12th, 2013)

Haass' warnings were stark and understandable, but also necessary. As will be portrayed in the next section Northern Ireland is at risk of returning to violence. However, when analysing the situation one must appreciate and understand the context. It is clear that there were issues related with each section of the proposals that were disagreeable to the parties. However, they are not unresolvable. As has been demonstrated in the past the Northern Irish parties, similar to all political parties, will only agree to negotiated settlements when the timing is right for them. They need to be able to guarantee support from their base. If they do not achieve this they risk weakening the support and relevance of their parties and in turn the strength of the resolutions. With the controversy about the 'on the runs' and the rising influence of political alternatives¹³ to mainstream unionism within their communities the timing of the agreements may not have been appropriate. Without the guarantee of support from their communities not only would the influence of the parties have been weakened but so too would the legitimacy of any agreements. Therefore as always with the Northern Irish peace-process it is not only the sentiments of any agreement that are important but equally important is the timing. This should not be construed as an apology for the failure of the stagnant talks. It has been written to portray the importance of both timing and context in a post-conflict Northern Ireland.

The Enduring Residue of Violence

In his March 2014 address to US Congressional subcommittee of foreign relations Richard Haass warned that 'violence...could very well re-emerge as a characteristic of daily life' (BBC News, March 24th, 2014). While the loyalist gangs have been recently reinvigorated the most persistent and serious threat still comes from dissident Irish Republican groups (See Horgan, 2013; Tonge, 2014; Currie and Taylor, 2011; Morrison, 2014). Since 2007, and Sinn Féin's acceptance of the PSNI there has been a significant rise in violent dissident republican activity (Horgan and Morrison, 2011) Groups such as the Continuity IRA, Real IRA, Oglagh na hEireann and the newly emerging New IRA have been responsible for the recent rise of terrorist activity in Northern Ireland. They have targeted the PSNI, the British Army, MI5 and other symbols of the 'British security establishment' in Northern Ireland. They have similarly attempted to disrupt the normalisation of political life in Northern Ireland with bombs and hoax devices targeting the towns, villages and transport networks of Northern Ireland. However, while these groups are justifiably labelled as terrorist organisations their most persistent violent activity are not acts of terrorism, but acts of vigilantism targeting the very communities they claim to represent (Horgan and Morrison, 2011, p.651).

Throughout the history of Irish Republicanism parallel to terrorism has been persistent levels of violent vigilantism. Within the Provisional IRA's training and induction manual known as *The Green Book* it was stated that one of the key elements of their guerrilla strategy was

...defending the war of liberation by punishing criminals, collaborators and informers (The IRA, 1977, p.8)

Across the decades this has seen the persistent targeting of suspected anti-social youths, joyriders, petty thieves, drug dealers, paedophiles and other criminals as well as those portrayed as collaborators or informers.¹⁴ The punishments inflicted ranged from warnings and curfews, to the more severe punishment beatings and shootings to the finality of expulsions and assassinations (Silke, 1998). Unlike their terrorist activity this 'self-policing' has mainly targeted those communities they claim to represent; the working-class nationalist communities of Northern Ireland. Upon analysis the purpose of this activity is clear for all to see. These groups seek power and control within their communities. They wish to undermine the police and the wider security and political establishment. Their aim is to make themselves indispensable within the community, and through this gain both passive and active support for their broader paramilitary campaign. Finally it provides them with the opportunity to eradicate potential internal and external threats to the stability of their organisation.

Across criminological research it has been consistently shown that vigilantism succeeds in gaining significant community support when there are low levels of confidence with the ability of the criminal justice system (Haas, de Keijser and Bruinsma, 2014). In the report published by the Patten Commission which provided the framework for the development of the PSNI it was stated that the rate of satisfaction with the police within the Catholic community was less than 50% (The Independent Commission on Policing in Northern Ireland, 1999). This has historically allowed for paramilitary groups to operate within these communities without significant fear of being reported to the police. Throughout *The Troubles* it was reported that the levels of support within republican communities for vigilantism ranged from a low of 24% to a high of 77% (Silke, 2000). It was to be some of these supporters who would go on to provide safe houses for weapons and members attempting to avoid police capture.

Each of the modern-day dissident groups has continued this tradition of 'community policing.' This allows for them to bolster their message of an illegitimate police force. In their minds the PSNI similar to their predecessors the RUC is a British police force operating in Ireland. They are an occupying force who has no right to police the republican communities of the six counties of Northern Ireland. Through their statements and vigilante activity they continuously attempt to undermine the PSNI in the eyes of the public and to portray them not only as an illegitimate and unrepresentative force, but an incapable one at that. This has been coupled with a lack of faith in the police to eradicate community crime, especially drug dealing. This lack of faith in the police remains one of the most pertinent issues remaining in the peace process. A history of perceived injustice is hard for many to forget.

I think that the probably most difficult one of all, and one that people still haven't got around is support for the PSNI. I think people do it in dribs and drabs and they do it in isolation. You know there is no one flocking to join the PSNI, although I would say there are individuals, maybe Catholics outside of West Belfast who are joining them. And fair play to them. I think that as the PSNI changes in composition, as it becomes our PSNI, and we have to defend it, and we have to promote it, have to work with it. (Interview with Danny Morrison)

Since 2009 the most persistent vigilante violence has been perpetrated by the Derry and North Donegal based Republican Action Against Drugs (RAAD). As their name suggests they have violently targeted suspected drug dealers within the Republican communities. Up to 2012 they claimed responsibility for a variety of punishment shootings, pipe-bomb attacks, expulsions and assassinations. Through their actions and statements they have aimed to simultaneously make themselves indispensable within the Republican communities, threaten those partaking in anti-social behaviour and undermine the existing police force, as is displayed in the 2010 statement below.

[PSNI] abandoned Catholic housing estates...and offer nationalists no hope...No amount of lofty platitudes and PR stunts can make up for their [PSNI] distinct lack of action. Anyone involved in anti-community activity should modify their behaviour or face the harshest of punishments. (The Derry Journal, August 12th 2010)

It was announced in 2012 that RAAD had merged with the Real IRA and other previously unaffiliated dissident Republicans. Their stated aim was to provide a “unified (dissident) structure, under a single leadership...subservient to the constitution of the Irish Republican Army” (McDonald, July 26th, 2012). While they have continued the terrorist activity of the Real IRA to the fore has been their consistent violent vigilantism. In October 2013 the newly merged group assassinated the suspected criminals Barry McCorry and Kevin Kearney. In their statement claiming responsibility for the death of Kearney they spoke to a variety of audiences. For those within the communities where Kearney was believed to have operated they emphasised that his activities had resulted in ‘many of our young people develop(ing) drug addictions, and some have lost their lives.’ They similarly emphasised that they, not the PSNI, would ‘not allow this to continue’ (The IRA, October 8th, 2013). To those drug dealers still operating within the communities they issued an ultimatum that ‘they have 48 hours from midnight to cease their drugs activity and leave the country’ (Ibid) Finally to the wider criminal community in the area of the Ardoyne where Kearney was executed they demanded that they ‘cease...activities at once and disband, you are aware of the consequences of your activities and you will receive no further warnings’ (Ibid). Through their actions and statements they were representing their former comrades in Sinn Féin as abandoning the very communities they represent. While these were the direct targets the statement

also sent a message to security establishment within Northern Ireland that the paramilitaries were doing the job that they were not, could not, and should not be doing.

As the importance of timing and gradualism emphasised earlier in the chapter the purpose of this vigilantism is tied to the maintenance of support for the organisation and the guarantee of both legitimacy and ultimately survival. Without a visible enemy it is more difficult for such an organisation to convince others of the purpose of their continued existence. In respect to vigilantism if this is to be successful it necessitates a lack of confidence in the criminal justice system. Historically throughout *The Troubles* this was relatively easier. The British Army were operating on the streets of the towns and cities of Northern Ireland and the PIRA were able to portray the RUC as an unrepresentative 'Protestant' police force. However, the army no longer have a presence on Northern Irish streets and with the advent of the PSNI, supported by Sinn Féin, the police service is now more representative than it has ever been in its history. The dissidents are aware of the problems this causes them. In a 2008 interview with journalist Suzanne Breen an unnamed leader of the Real IRA stated that

With more attacks on the RUC/PSNI we believe the stage will be reached where British soldiers are brought back onto the streets to bolster the cops. This will shatter the façade that the British presence has gone and normality reigns. People will once again be made visibly aware that we remain occupied.
(Breen, February 4th, 2008)

An organisation who for decades had been fighting to run the British Army off the streets of Northern Ireland were now fighting for their return, all to justify their own continued existence in the eyes of their existing and potential membership and support. They needed that visible enemy.

One of the central aims of the establishment of the PSNI was to provide a more representative police force. It was the aim of the Patten Report that existing Catholic police officers in other jurisdictions, especially the Republic of Ireland, should be approached to apply for positions in the new police force, and that an equal number of Catholics and Protestants should be 'drawn from the pool of qualified candidates' (The Independent Commission on Policing for Northern Ireland, 1999 paras 15.17 and 15.10). The successful implementation of this would have a debilitating effect on the legitimacy of the continued existence of a dissident vigilante presence, and resultantly would deteriorate their support.

A representative police force, or even a more representative police force, would negate their claims of an illegitimate police force. Resultantly in the aftermath of Sinn Féin lending their delayed support to the PSNI the dissidents commenced an unstated tactic of targeting Catholic recruits. For those who naively define the Northern Irish conflict as a religious one this would seem counter-intuitive. However, each of the groups was responsible for the targeting, and at times death of individual Catholic officers. Ronan Kerr, Stephen Carroll, Peadar Heffron, each one a Catholic officer and each one a victim of dissident

paramilitary activity. As with all acts of terrorism the target of the attacks is greater than the direct victims and their families. They have been orchestrated so as to deter a further influx of Catholic recruits and to deter those within the force from remaining involved. Similarly it was designed to highlight the dissidents' deliberate disenfranchisement from the strategies and policies of Sinn Féin. For as long as there is a threat within the community coupled with a reticence to trust the police and a lack of faith in their abilities there is always the potential for the existence and survival of organised vigilantism. Therefore in order to counter this the wider political and security establishment must strive to delegitimise the existence of these groups through tackling each of these three strands.

This analysis of the non-political illegality demonstrates that we need to look outside of both terrorism and peace and conflict studies to truly understand this. We need to also consider, among others, the field of criminology and the strides it has made. While this clearly can give us a greater understanding of the non-political criminal activity, such as vigilantism, it should also be used as an analytical lens to analyse terrorism as well. For years the fields of criminology and crime sciences almost entirely ignored terrorism studies (LaFree, 2007; Levi, Karstedt and Ruggiero, 2010), and terrorism researchers likewise have ignored the benefits of analysing terrorism through a criminological spectrum. To some extent there has been a kind of terrorism studies 'exceptionalism' present. Analysts have credited terrorism as being somehow different from other crimes, and that it resultantly requires a separate form of analysis. This could be due to the political nature of both terrorism and counter-terrorism, its high levels of casualties or its significant media profile. But when we look at the nature of what terrorists are partaking in, murdering, maiming and threatening violence, as well of the financing of illegal activity the parallels between this and ordinary crime are clear. For so long the defining political element of terrorism has been the most divisive element in terrorism studies. Therefore by stepping away from the political motivations of terrorism and analysing in the same way as ordinary crime we can continue to make significant advances. These advances can be made in relation to every aspect of terrorist activity from its choice and location of targets, use of weapon to the individuals and groups involved, as well as their rehabilitation.

Recent years have seen advances in the application of criminology and crime sciences to the study of terrorism. Institutions such as University College London, University of Massachusetts Lowell and The University of East London house their terrorism researchers in the fields of criminology and crime sciences. The multi-disciplinary research National Consortium for the Study and Responses to Terrorism (START) is led by Gary LaFree, a criminologist by training. We are also gradually seeing more research publications on terrorism being published by criminologists, or those using criminological methodologies and theories. By having this criminological analysis of terrorism being carried out in parallel to the political, conflict and peace studies analyses we will gradually approach the sought after holistic understanding. This is not to suggest that criminology should be utilised as a replacement for all other disciplines. On the contrary this should be applied alongside all other forms of

analysis. It is not in competition with any other field, but is adding a separate component to our analysis.

Conclusion

The aim of this chapter has been to highlight that in order to fully understand and ultimately tackle terrorism and terrorist groups we sometimes need to look beyond the violence, and the terrorist violence specifically. If one was to focus purely on the 'terrorist' activity of these groups they could potentially overlook the wider activity of the group. The chapter has taken two disparate issues, paramilitary vigilantism and the gradualism of change, to highlight this argument. What ties both of these issues together is the organisations' continuous venture for survival and legitimacy. It is essential that if we are to continue in developing our understanding of terrorism and terrorists¹⁵ that our questions are not constrained to 'why do people engage in political violence?' We must diversify our questions, and open our minds up to the wider scope of involvement in a terrorist group and terrorist activity. We must continue to acknowledge the heterogeneity of roles, intentions and personalities of those we would readily classify as being a terrorist. It is paramount that our understanding of a group is not defined by their 'headline' goals or the labels we assign them. We must look in-depth at the entire breadth of their activity and goals.

Northern Ireland is moving into one of the most important periods of the peace process. The structures of society have been established, and to a large extent accepted. It is the duty of the political representatives and society as a whole to guarantee that the final outstanding issues are resolved. However, it is imperative for the success of the peace process that as much time as is needed to bring about a resolution is taken. It will amount to nothing if it is only the political representatives who agree to any resolution. It is more important that they can bring base with them in support. With respect to violent dissident republicanism it is believed that the threat they pose will continue to rise. 2016 will mark the centenary of the 1916 Easter Rising in which the Irish Republican forefathers attempted to overthrow British rule in Ireland and proclaim an independent Irish state. It appears to be the aim of the dissident groups to re-establish their legitimacy and portray the continued necessity of paramilitary republicanism to achieve their overall aim of a united Ireland. Northern Ireland is a country predominantly at peace. However, this is a peace which has "come dropping slow."

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² A county in the north west of the Ireland

³ Also known as the Belfast Agreement

⁴ The refusal of any elected Sinn Fein member to take their seat in Dail Eireann, Stormont or Westminster.

⁵ The seat of the dissolved parliament in Northern Ireland

⁶ The Irish parliament

⁷ The Provisional IRA murdered Queen Elizabeth's cousin, Lord Henry Mountbatten in Mullaghmore Co. Sligo in 1979. Sean O'Callaghan discussed the

plot to kill Prince Charles and Princess Diana in a London theatre in 1984. See O'Callaghan, S. (1999). *The Informer*. London: Corgi

⁸ Represented by Martin McGuinness

⁹ This took place at a banquet in Windsor Castle during the April 2014 state visit of the Irish president Michael D. Higgins to Great Britain.

¹⁰ The sections of the Irish constitution which laid claim on behalf of the Irish people to the whole island of Ireland. These articles were withdrawn from the Irish Constitution with the passing of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998

¹¹ For an analysis of splits in Irish Republicanism see Morrison (2014)

¹² For the full proposals see *An Agreement Among the Parties of the Northern Ireland Executive on Parades, Select Commemorations and Related Protests; Flags and Emblem; and Contending with the Past*. (December, 2013) Available online at <http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/haass.pdf> (Last Accessed April 1st, 2014)

¹³ This includes the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) and Traditional Unionist Voice (TUV)

¹⁴ For the most in-depth analysis of Northern Irish vigilantism see Hamill, H. (2010). *The Hoods: Crime and Punishment in West Belfast*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

¹⁵ It is important to note that the understanding of one does not guarantee the understanding of the other.